

Observations on the Association between Operational Readiness and Personal Readiness in the Canadian Forces

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Abstract

This report was written to assist the Stress and Coping Group within Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) Toronto develop, as part of its long-term project to explore the notion of psychological resiliency, a methodology to examine operational readiness at the individual level (i.e., personal readiness) in the Canadian Forces (CF). The report will focus on: 1) existing policies governing individual readiness for deployed operations, and 2) actual and perceived individual psychological readiness for deployed operations.

While the CF has had considerable success in devising and maintaining systems to assure unit readiness, the CF has invested very little in examining the question of individual or personal readiness. For the purpose of this study, personal operational readiness (individual readiness) is defined as “the physical, operational and psychological preparedness of an individual to deploy.”

Individual readiness has become an even more pressing issue for the CF in the past decade with the higher operational tempo that the CF is experiencing. This high operational tempo combined with reductions in both personnel and financial resources has led to a situation where the CF is unable to sustain its ability to carry out its roles and missions in the long term.

The report observed that there are a number of systemic problems that appear to have negative impacts on the ability of the CF to ensure high levels of individual readiness. The report recommended that research be considered to further investigate the observations made in this report.

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Résumé

Ce rapport vise à aider le Groupe du stress et des stratégies d'adaptation au sein de Recherche et développement pour la défense (RDDC) de Toronto à élaborer, dans le cadre de son projet à long terme portant sur la notion de résilience psychologique, une méthodologie qui permettrait d'examiner l'état de préparation opérationnelle sur le plan individuel (état de préparation personnel) dans les Forces canadiennes (FC), et qui porterait en particulier sur les questions suivantes : 1) politiques en vigueur régissant l'état de préparation individuel en vue des opérations de déploiement et 2) état de préparation psychologique réel et perçu de l'individu en vue des opérations de déploiement.

Bien que les FC soient parvenues, avec considérablement de succès, à concevoir et à appliquer des systèmes visant à assurer l'état de préparation des unités, elles ont peu investi dans l'examen de l'état de préparation individuel ou personnel. Aux fins de la présente étude, l'état de préparation opérationnelle personnel (état de préparation individuel) est défini comme étant « l'état de préparation physique, opérationnelle et psychologique d'un individu en vue d'un déploiement ».

Au cours de la dernière décennie, devant l'accélération de la cadence opérationnelle que connaissent les FC, la question de l'état de préparation individuel est devenue encore plus pressante. Cette cadence accélérée, combinée au manque de personnel et de ressources financières, fait en sorte que les FC sont incapables de maintenir leur capacité d'exécuter leur rôle et leurs missions à longue échéance.

Ce rapport fait ressortir un certain nombre de problèmes systémiques qui semblent avoir des répercussions négatives sur la capacité des FC à assurer un degré élevé de préparation sur le plan individuel. Les auteurs recommandent que l'on envisage de poursuivre les recherches à la lumière des observations formulées dans le présent rapport.

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Executive Summary

G.E. Sharpe, Allan English. 2006. Observations on the Association between Operational Readiness and Personal Readiness in the Canadian Forces. DRDC Toronto CR 2006-072. Defence R&D Canada – Toronto.

The Stress and Coping Group within Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) Toronto is beginning a long-term project to explore the notion of psychological resiliency. One important aspect to consider in this project is the notion of operational readiness. This study is designed to assist DRDC to develop a methodology to examine operational readiness at the individual level (personal readiness) in the Canadian Forces (CF), especially in the areas of: 1) existing policies governing individual readiness for deployed operations, and 2) actual and perceived individual psychological readiness for deployed operations.

While the CF has had considerable success in devising and maintaining systems to assure unit readiness, the CF has invested very little in examining the question of individual or personal readiness. Unlike operational readiness, personal readiness is not measured in combat skill levels or the time needed to respond to a call out, but, for the most part, the degree to which an individual is psychologically prepared to deploy and/or conduct operations and to withstand the mental challenges associated with the operation, including separation from family and other support groups. For the purpose of this study, personal operational readiness (individual readiness) is defined as “the physical, operational and psychological preparedness of an individual to deploy.”

Individual readiness has become an even more pressing issue for the CF in the past decade with the higher operational tempo that the CF is experiencing. Today, the average combat arms soldier has been involved in multiple deployments, and the situation is even worse for many of the support trades. Equally demanding is the degree of personal readiness required of those CF members who are reservists who volunteer to be augmentees frequently required, often with little notice, to flesh out operational units that are deploying.

This report was conducted by consulting subject matter experts to: 1) establish a base line understanding of existing policies and procedures that are in place to make sure that operational readiness is achieved; 2) determine the degree of awareness and personal understanding of these policies and procedures among the group of people responsible to implement them; 3) determine the chain of command’s assessment of the effectiveness of the current policies and procedures and their personal assessment of the state of their subordinates’ preparedness to deploy; and 4) assess individual members’ experiences with respect to personal readiness as they prepare to deploy and return from deployments.

For much of the period since the end of the Cold War, the CF has been forced to use a high operational tempo personnel employment cycle with about one third of its

deployable force “preparing for, engaged in or returning from an overseas mission.” This high operational tempo combined with reduction in both personnel and financial resources has led to a situation where the CF is severely challenged to sustain its ability to carry out its roles and missions in the long term.

The report observed that:

1. The CF has no systemic method to collect statistics to assess how well the various policies related to personal readiness are meeting their intent, or indeed, if the policies are being applied consistently across the CF.
2. Unintended consequences of policy decisions in other areas are continuing to cause serious problems for health delivery in the CF. Furthermore, the financial demands on the force generators associated with transformation are reducing the funds available at local levels for infrastructure maintenance and development, which in turn is causing many of the short term problems in providing a sufficient level of garrison mental health care.
3. CF members who deploy, depending on their circumstances, are treated quite differently – in fact, policy direction reinforces, to a degree, this different treatment.
4. The different treatment accorded to deploying CF members is based on factors like employment status (e.g., Regular vs. Reserve), deployment job (part of a formed unit vs augmentee), and so on. These factors can be used to place deploying members in a number of identifiable sub-categories, each with a potentially different level of personal readiness, for purposes of preliminary analysis.

The report recommended that research be considered to address the following issues:

1. To create a Performance Measure that would allow the CF to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the procedures resulting from CF policy designed to improve the personal readiness of CF members in the pre- and post-deployment phases.
2. To devise a methodology to assess the level of personal readiness of individuals being prepared to deploy, based on each of the major categories or situations described in the report.
3. To prepare a responsibility-accountability map that would assess the relationship between the bureaucracy responsible for making the individual preparedness policies for members of the CF preparing to deploy and the chain of command actually accountable for implementing the policies for preparing CF members to deploy.
4. To study second and third order consequences of high deployment rates on families and specific family members.

5. To assess the impact of the level of medical and other support services available to the family in the local community on family stability during a deployment, and to determine the impact this may have on the psychological readiness of the deployed member.
6. To develop a methodology to assess the impact on the family and on individuals when married service couples are both subject to deployments.
7. To assess the overall effectiveness of the Air Force's Mission Support Squadron concept.

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Sommaire

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Le Groupe du stress et des stratégies d'adaptation au sein de Recherche et développement pour la défense Canada (RDDC) de Toronto a entrepris un projet à longue échéance visant à explorer la notion de résilience psychologique. Un aspect important de ce projet est la notion d'état de préparation opérationnelle. Cette étude vise à aider RDDC à élaborer une méthodologie qui lui permettrait d'examiner l'état de préparation opérationnelle sur le plan individuel (état de préparation personnel) dans les Forces canadiennes (FC), et qui porterait en particulier sur les questions suivantes : 1) politiques en vigueur régissant l'état de préparation individuel en vue des opérations de déploiement et 2) état de préparation psychologique réel et perçu de l'individu en vue des opérations de déploiement.

Bien que les FC soient parvenues, avec considérablement de succès, à concevoir et à appliquer des systèmes visant à assurer l'état de préparation des unités, elles ont peu investi dans l'examen de l'état de préparation individuel ou personnel. Contrairement à l'état de préparation opérationnelle, l'état de préparation personnel ne se mesure pas en fonction des compétences au combat ni du temps requis pour répondre à un appel mais correspond plutôt, en général, à la mesure dans laquelle un individu est prêt psychologiquement à être déployé et/ou à diriger des opérations et à faire face aux défis d'ordre mental associés à l'opération, notamment la séparation de la famille et d'autres groupes de soutien. Aux fins de la présente étude, l'état de préparation opérationnelle personnel (état de préparation individuel) est défini comme étant « l'état de préparation physique, opérationnelle et psychologique d'un individu en vue d'un déploiement ».

Au cours de la dernière décennie, devant l'accélération de la cadence opérationnelle que connaissent les FC, la question de l'état de préparation individuel est devenue encore plus pressante. Aujourd'hui, le militaire moyen des armes de combat a participé à de multiples déploiements, et la situation est encore pire pour bon nombre de membres des métiers de soutien. Pour les membres de la Réserve des FC qui se portent volontaires pour renforcer, souvent avec un court préavis, les effectifs des unités opérationnelles en déploiement, le degré de préparation personnel exigé est également élevé.

Au cours de la rédaction de ce rapport, on a consulté des experts en la matière pour : 1) établir une compréhension de base des politiques et procédures qui permettent actuellement de s'assurer de l'état de préparation opérationnelle; 2) déterminer dans quelle mesure les personnes responsables de leur application sont sensibilisées et comprennent bien ces politiques et procédures; 3) déterminer comment la chaîne de commandement évalue l'efficacité des politiques et procédures actuelles et comment ces militaires évaluent personnellement l'état de préparation de leurs subalternes en vue d'un

déploiement; 4) évaluer l'expérience individuelle des membres en ce qui concerne leur état de préparation personnel en vue d'un déploiement et d'un retour de déploiement.

Pendant la majeure partie de la période qui s'est écoulée depuis la fin de la guerre froide, les FC se sont vues obligées d'appliquer un cycle d'emploi du personnel à cadence opérationnelle élevée; en effet, environ un tiers des membres déployables sont, à un moment précis, en train de « se préparer à une mission outremer, de s'engager dans une telle mission ou d'en revenir ». Cette cadence accélérée, combinée au manque de personnel et de ressources financières, fait en sorte que les FC sont incapables de maintenir leur capacité d'exécuter leur rôle et leurs missions à longue échéance.

Le rapport a mis en lumière les points suivants :

5. Les FC n'ont pas de méthode systémique pour recueillir des statistiques qui leur permettraient d'évaluer dans quelle mesure les diverses politiques liées à l'état de préparation personnel répondent au but souhaité ou même, si les politiques sont appliquées uniformément partout à l'intérieur des FC.
6. Les conséquences involontaires de décisions stratégiques prises dans d'autres secteurs continuent de causer des problèmes graves sur le plan de la prestation des services de santé au sein des FC. En outre, les besoins financiers liés à la constitution des forces en vue de la transformation viennent réduire les fonds disponibles à l'échelle locale pour la maintenance et le développement de l'infrastructure; ce phénomène est à l'origine de bon nombre des problèmes à court terme qui se posent lorsqu'il s'agit de fournir un niveau suffisant de soins de santé mentale aux garnisons.
7. Les membres des FC en déploiement sont traités différemment, selon leur situation particulière – en fait, l'orientation de la politique renforce jusqu'à un certain point ces différences de traitement.
8. Les différences dans le traitement accordé aux membres des FC en déploiement reposent sur des facteurs comme la situation d'emploi (p. ex., dans Forces régulières ou dans Réserve), la fonction lors du déploiement (intégration à une unité formée ou renfort), etc. On peut utiliser ces facteurs pour classer les membres en déploiement dans un certain nombre de sous-catégories identifiables, dont chacune peut être assortie d'un niveau différent d'état de préparation personnel, à des fins d'analyse préliminaire.

Les auteurs du rapport ont recommandé que des recherches soient menées dans les buts suivants :

8. Créer une mesure du rendement qui permettrait aux FC de comprendre l'efficacité et l'efficience des procédures résultant de la politique des FC visant à améliorer l'état de préparation personnel des membres des FC au cours des phases de pré-déploiement et de post-déploiement.

9. Concevoir des méthodes servant à évaluer le niveau de préparation personnel des individus qui se préparent à un déploiement, en fonction de chacune des grandes catégories ou situations décrites dans le rapport.
10. Dresser un schéma des responsabilités et des comptes à rendre qui permettrait d'évaluer les liens entre les services responsables de l'élaboration des politiques sur l'état de préparation individuel s'appliquant aux membres des FC qui se préparent à un déploiement, et la chaîne de commandement responsable, dans les faits, de l'application des politiques visant à préparer les membres des FC à un déploiement.
11. Étudier les conséquences de deuxième et troisième ordres que peuvent avoir les taux élevés de déploiement sur les familles et sur certains membres précis des familles.
12. Évaluer les répercussions qu'a le niveau de services médicaux et d'autres services de soutien offerts aux familles sur les lieux, sur la stabilité familiale au cours d'un déploiement et déterminer l'impact que cela peut avoir sur l'état de préparation psychologique du militaire en déploiement.
13. Élaborer des méthodes pour mesurer les conséquences que peuvent avoir sur la famille et les individus les situations où les deux membres d'un couple marié font l'objet d'un déploiement.
14. Évaluer l'efficacité globale du concept de l'escadron de soutien de mission au sein de la Force aérienne.

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

Introduction

The Stress and Coping Group within Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) Toronto is beginning a long-term project to explore the notion of psychological resiliency. One important aspect to consider in this project is the notion of operational readiness.

This study addresses a requirement for expertise in assisting DRDC to develop a methodology to examine operational readiness at the individual level (personal readiness) in the Canadian Forces (CF), especially in the areas of: 1) existing policies governing individual readiness for deployed operations, and 2) actual and perceived individual psychological readiness for deployed operations.

Background

The “fundamental purpose” of the CF is “the ordered, lawful application of military force pursuant to governmental direction.”¹ Therefore, the Canadian government has authorized the CF to organize and train “multi-purpose, combat-capable forces” to carry out a “broad range of tasks assigned to them, including: observation, peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions; combat and interdiction operations; mine-clearance and protection of displaced persons...surveillance and control of Canadian territory, airspace and maritime approaches; civil defence and protection of infrastructure; search and rescue; and disaster relief.” In addition, the CF must be able to “support the civil authorities of other federal departments and agencies, and other levels of government, with respect to environmental surveillance, counter-terrorism, illegal immigration and drug-trafficking” as well as providing support for “major international events such as the G8 Summit, and provide transportation for visiting dignitaries.”²

Ensuring that the CF is able to generate forces that are able to carry out the tasks assigned to them by the government is an important concern for the CF. Not all units can be maintained at the same level of readiness to conduct operations. Therefore, the term “operational readiness” is often used by the CF, and most other armed forces, to describe the capability, usually rated on a scale of “low” to “high,” of particular units to perform their assigned tasks. The level of operational readiness required of a unit has always had significant cost implications as it is generally very costly in terms of both human and financial resources to bring units up to higher levels of readiness and then to maintain them at these higher levels. Particularly during the decade of the 1990s, the CF became very aware that readiness had an associated cost – the higher the level of readiness the

¹ Department of National Defence (DND), *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Kingston, ON: CF Leadership Institute, 2003), 4.

² “Multi-purpose, combat-capable forces,” DND web site, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/multipurpose_e.asp, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

higher the cost of sustaining it. However, the definition of operational readiness used by the CF has varied significantly over time, and, until recently, the definition was used in the context of the readiness of a tactically significant force to be able to perform an assigned mission. In this context, which is still in use today, individual units within a force may also have an operational readiness level that is higher than that for the overall force.

The readiness of a particular unit, in a military context, is normally determined by the perceived threat that the force or force elements have been put together to deal with. For example, a small number of North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) interceptors are held at a very high alert level, measured in minutes, to allow them to intercept potential threats before they reach the point at which they can release weapons or carry out a terrorist action. However, the larger fighter capability that is designed to support the alert force or to deploy from main operating bases may be held at levels of readiness measured in tens of days. Similarly, a Brigade Group may have a high readiness company able to respond to a tasking in hours, while the rest of the group may take 10 days or more to prepare for deployment. Likewise, a naval task group that may take tens of days to deploy will normally have one or more high readiness ships that can sail in hours.

One factor that has not been considered particularly significant in the past when planning for operational readiness in the CF has been the question of individual or personal readiness. Unlike operational readiness, personal readiness is not measured in combat skill levels or the time needed to respond to a call out, but, for the most part, the degree to which an individual is psychologically prepared to deploy and/or conduct operations and to withstand the mental challenges associated with the operation, including separation from family and other support groups. As a result, the preparedness of an individual member's family to deal with the rigours of a deployment is also considered a part of personal readiness. In the words of one subject matter expert consulted, "A happy family (at home) means a happy soldier (on deployment)."

In the case of personal readiness, the traditional definition of operational readiness needs to be expanded to include the individual's preparedness to deal with the mission that he or she will be required to perform and how well the individual has been prepared (and how well the individual has prepared himself/herself) to cope with the psychological aspects of their mission. In the NORAD case, for example, personal readiness may relate to how well prepared the interceptor aircrew are, as well as the air weapons controllers directing the mission, to order the downing of a civilian airliner to prevent an attack against a target. Another example that demands individual psychological readiness might be a Search and Rescue Technician who is required to deal with a rescue in an isolated location involving a number of casualties who have injuries that are beyond his or her medical training to handle. For many CF members who deploy on United Nations (UN) or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missions, the issue of dealing with the shock of witnessing atrocities tests their psychological preparedness. Even domestic support operations, as became evident during the CF response to the Swiss Air 111

disaster (Operation Persistence) not far from Halifax, in September 1998,³ can result in severe psychological strain when it is least expected.

Individual readiness has become an even more pressing issue for the CF in the past decade with the higher operational tempo that the CF is experiencing. Today, the average combat arms soldier has been involved in multiple deployments, and the situation is even worse for many of the support trades. Equally demanding is the degree of personal readiness required of those CF members who are reservists who volunteer to be augmentees⁴ frequently required, often with little notice, to flesh out operational units that are deploying. These issues are discussed in more detail below.

For the purpose of this study, personal operational readiness (individual readiness) will be defined as “the physical, operational and psychological preparedness of an individual to deploy.” Physical and operational readiness is assessed in a number of ways as described in CF policy, primarily in the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) Direction for International Operations, known as DDIO, chapter 12 – Personnel Support. This chapter provides direction, guidance and information to assist the appropriate staffs and commanders to select, screen, prepare, deploy and administer (including a proper post-operation follow up) personnel who are assigned to DCDS international deployed operations. Psychological readiness, aside from specific check points, is not as readily assessed. One of the purposes of this report is to describe the policy as it exists and to compare that policy with the actual procedures related to personal readiness that are being followed. The next section of this report outlines the methodology that has been used in the research and writing of the report.

Methodology

The report has used the methodology described below.

1. Established a base line understanding of existing policies and procedures that are in place to make sure that operational readiness is achieved, by-
 - Reviewing strategic and operational level policy documents dealing with pre- and post-deployment preparation, and extracting the actions prescribed by and intentions of the policy or directive;
 - Summarizing areas specifically related to the personal dimension of operational readiness; and
 - Describing the process that the policies anticipate will result.
2. Determined the degree of awareness and personal understanding of these policies and procedures among the group of people responsible to implement them, by -

³ For more information see DND, “Operation Persistence,” http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/persistence_e.asp.

⁴ According to DCDS Direction for International Operations (DDIO) chapter 12: Personnel Support, augmentees are “...Regular or Reserve Force members assigned to an operation to augment a unit in theatre that is formed primarily from an established CF unit.”

- Consulting subject matter experts (SMEs) at the Peace Support Training Centre in Kingston;
 - Consulting SMEs with pre-deployment staffs at a major force generation base and at headquarters in Ottawa;
 - Consulting SMEs with strategic level staff (responsible for international operations); and
 - Drawing out lessons learned from these SMEs as they apply to individual readiness.
3. Determined the chain of command's assessment of the effectiveness of the current policies and procedures and their personal assessment of the state of their subordinates' preparedness to deploy, by-
- Consulting SMEs in the chain of command of a set number of specific personnel that are in the process of preparing for deployment;
 - Consulting SMEs in the chain of command of a set number of specific personnel that are in the process of returning from a deployment; and
 - Eliciting lessons learned from SMEs in the chain of command as they apply to individual readiness.
4. Assessed individual members' experiences with respect to personal readiness as they prepare to deploy and return from deployments, by-
- Consulting SMEs among Regular and Reserve Force personnel from both operational and support classifications that are in the process of preparing for or returning from a deployment; and
 - Reviewing discussion notes to identify discrepancies between desired outcomes of the current policy and procedure and the real world experiences of deployed personnel and their chain of command.

PART 2 – HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Changes in CF Operations after the Cold War

Two factors have had a significant impact on personal readiness among CF members in the past 15 years. The first is the cuts in the size and the budget of the Department of National Defence (DND)⁵ without a concomitant reduction in its taskings, and the second is the nature of operations conducted by the CF in this era. This section of the paper

⁵ The Department of National Defence (DND) comprises both the CF and the civilian employees that support the CF, "The National Defence family," DND web site, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/family_e.asp, internet accessed 1 May 2005.

summarizes the reasons for the cuts and their impact on the CF, and then describes the nature of CF operations in the post-Cold War world.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 marked, for many, the end of the Cold War. Other events at that time also marked the transition to a “new world order” including the 1989 announcement by Warsaw Pact nations of deep cuts to its conventional forces, the unification of Germany in October 1990, and the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991. For most Western governments this “new world order” brought expectations of a “peace dividend” and Canada, like its allies, began to reduce its military forces in the early 1990s in anticipation of a need for less spending on defence and security.

The downsizing of the CF in the 1990s was precipitated by defence budget cuts as part of the government’s deficit reduction program.⁶ The CF’s contribution to deficit reduction was achieved by cutting the defence budget, which totalled \$12 billion in 1993-1994, to \$9.38 billion in 1998-1999.⁷ Unfortunately for the CF, Treasury Board adopted a methodology for making cuts to DND that eschewed careful consideration of how cuts to the CF could be achieved while maintaining its operational effectiveness. Instead, resources were removed from DND, making the status quo unsustainable, and then the CF was forced to scramble to make cuts while still conducting operations.⁸ Because many of the budget cuts made in the 1990s were unforecast, chaos in the CF’s downsizing program resulted and a number of ad hoc, uncoordinated efforts to re-structure the CF ensued.⁹

As a result of post-Cold War budget cuts, the CF was reduced from about 90,000 Regular Force personnel in 1990 to approximately 62,000 Regular Force personnel today.¹⁰ Today’s force size reflects a twenty-five year low for the CF. Much of the personnel reduction was carried out under the “Forces Reduction Program (FRP), a program created in 1992 to reduce the complement of the CF by encouraging members to take early retirement. The plan continued until the end of the 1997-1998 fiscal year.”¹¹

At the same time that significant cuts were being made in the CF personnel strength and budget allocation, the government demands for CF participation in various operations increased. Instead of a relatively quiet post-Cold War world where governments could reap a “peace dividend,” a new world disorder greeted policy makers. Starting with the

⁶ DND, *The Aerospace Capability Framework* (Ottawa: Director General Air Force Development, 2003), 43.

⁷ “About DND/CF, Budget,” DND website, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/budget_e.asp, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

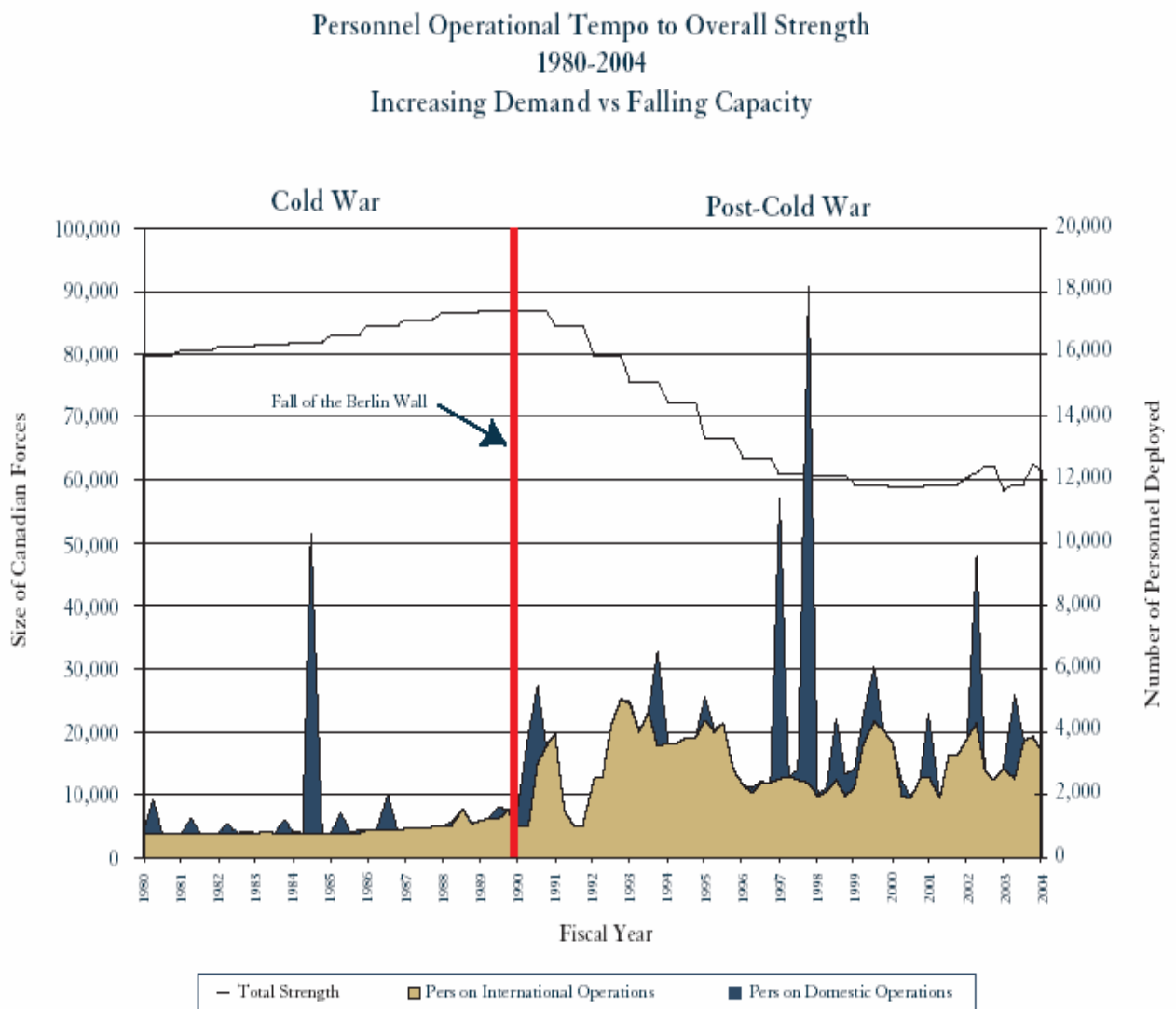
⁸ Detomasi, “Re-engineering ...,” 329-30.

⁹ These issues are discussed in more detail in G.E. (Joe) Sharpe and Allan English, *Principles for Change in the Post-Cold War Command and Control in the Canadian Forces* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2002).

¹⁰ “The National Defence family,” DND web site, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/family_e.asp, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

¹¹ See for example, DND, *Annual Report 2002-2003* [of the Ombudsman for National Defence and the Canadian Forces] http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/annual/2002-2003_e.asp#unfair, internet accessed 1 May 2005.

first Gulf War, continuing through a variety of crises precipitated by failed states, and culminating in the post-September 11, 2001 “war on terror,” this anarchic international situation produced a number of scenarios in which the Canadian government decided that it wanted to intervene with military contributions. Combined with demands for CF participation in a number of domestic operations during this period, on average the CF was far busier than it had ever been during the Cold War. Figure 1 illustrates how the increase in the number of CF deployments has coincided with a decrease in the number of CF personnel available for service during the post-Cold War period. In the post-Cold War period while the CF’s resources (budget and its personnel strength) was cut by about 20 percent, the number of its personnel deployed on operations increased threefold.



The cumulative effect of the cuts and the government policies devised to implement them has had a serious impact on the ability of the CF to conduct its roles and missions in an

effective and sustainable fashion at the beginning of the 21st century. Even though the defence budget has been increased recently, including “three successive budget increases totalling more than \$5 billion, to be delivered between 2001-2002 and 2006-2007,”¹² recent CF economic impact assessments highlight the fact the CF is significantly under-resourced to carry out its assigned roles and missions. Even recent promises of dramatically increased funding for DND are not likely to change anything soon, as most of the promised funding is not scheduled to be provided for several years – if it materializes at all. The following statements in recent CF economic impact assessments highlight the severity of the problem. The head of the Army stated that, “The cumulative costs of not funding ([Army] programs) are not only significant and growing, but oftentimes are hidden insofar as they contribute to skill fade, career stagnation, and asset deterioration beyond economical repair...” The head of the Navy is quoted as saying that, “the navy ‘faces the dilemma of not having enough people to meet minimum requirements and not enough, or limited resources to provide them with the necessary tools to also do their jobs fully.’” The head of the Air Force concluded that “The air force is ‘beyond the point where even constant dedication is sufficient to sustain the capabilities needed to meet assigned Defence tasks,’ [and the Air Force] ‘remains fragile due to chronic underfunding and asymmetric cuts to personnel. Our Wings and Squadrons are too hollow to sustain the current tempo of operations.’”¹³

A major factor contributing to CF’s recent problems in carrying out its assigned roles and missions is that unlike Cold War operations that largely consisted of relatively short deployments from main operating bases, CF operations over the past 15 years have increasingly been expeditionary in nature. The impact of expeditionary operations on the CF, and especially the personal readiness of CF members, is discussed next.

The Impact of Expeditionary Operations on CF Personnel in the Post-Cold War Period

Many people find it difficult to understand why with a paid strength of over 60,000 the CF is able to send only a few thousand people at a time, and sometimes much less than this number, on operations. This difficulty can be explained by the saying that amateurs study tactics while professionals study logistics. That is to say that most people, including the media, focus on the more glamorous operational side of missions and that few study the mundane details of how these missions are sustained. Yet the sustainment of missions, including the human dimension of sustaining forces, is critical to mission success. With the recent shift to largely expeditionary operations by Canada and its allies in the “new world order,” it is important to understand how this type of operation impacts on the human dimension of sustaining armed forces.

¹² “About DND/CF, Budget,” DND website, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/budget_e.asp, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

¹³ Stephen Thorne, “Military money too little, too late: Money in federal budget likely not enough for overstretched military,” *Halifax Herald* (25 April 2005) <http://www.herald.ns.ca/stories/2005/04/25/fCanada112.raw.html>, internet accessed 26 April 2005.

Expeditionary operations differ from the operations conducted by the CF during the Cold War in a number of ways: 1) forces are often sent to austere locations where they must provide many of the services themselves that were once provided by others at main operating bases; 2) forces are sent more frequently to dangerous locations where they must provide for their own security; 3) forces are often deployed long distances from their major sources of supply and from conventional supply lines necessitating more larger and more robust supply chains; 4) forces are frequently expected to conduct expeditionary operations over a period of months or even years as opposed to missions over a period of days or weeks during the Cold War.¹⁴ All these factors combined together mean that expeditionary forces require a large support component, encapsulated in the concept of the tail-to-teeth ratio.

The tail-to-teeth ratio is the number of non-combatants (tail) that it takes to keep one combatant (teeth) fighting. In modern armed forces the “tail” is significantly larger than the “teeth.”¹⁵ One part of the “tail” is those who are awaiting training, in training, or those awaiting release from the armed forces. While resources must be provided to pay and look after them and they are counted toward the maximum number of personnel authorized by the government to be in the military, they are not part of its trained effective strength (TES), i.e., those members of the military who are trained and fit for operations. For example, in today’s CF with a paid strength of about 62,000, the TES is only about 53,000, or 85 percent of the force.¹⁶ However, there are many others who are part of the TES, but are not part of the armed forces’ “teeth.”

In the Second World War, the Canadian Army counted only 34.2 percent of its personnel as part of the fighting arms (teeth), somewhat less than the 43.5 percent in the US Army.¹⁷ The large number of non-combatants can be explained not only by the number of those who were not part of the TES, but also by the large number of personnel required to maintain the long supply lines from North America to Europe and the large number of specialists required to support the fighters (e.g., administrators, logisticians, communications specialists, equipment repair personnel, military police, medical personnel, lawyers, headquarters staff, and so on). Another important impact on the human dimension of sustaining expeditionary operations is the nature of the operations themselves.

The impression that many Canadians have of CF operations in the post-Cold War period is one of lightly armed peacekeepers working in a relatively benign environment.

¹⁴ These concepts are discussed in more detail in Allan D. English, ed., *Canadian Expeditionary Air Forces*, proceedings of the 2003 Air Symposium held at the Canadian Forces College, Bison Paper 5 (Winnipeg: Centre for Defence and Security Studies, 2004).

¹⁵ Martin van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977). Van Creveld’s classic work examines the “nuts and bolts” of war: namely, those formidable problems of movement and supply, transportation and administration, so often mentioned — but rarely explored — by the vast majority of books on military history.

¹⁶ Stephen Thorne, “Military objectives ignore \$1.1B shortfall,” CNews (2 May 2005) <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2005/05/02/pf-1022626.html>, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

¹⁷ John A. English, *On Infantry* (New York: Praeger, 1984), 138-9.

However, DND official sources note that today "...although a major war is unlikely, conditions in several regions of the world remain unstable and unpredictable. Canada is also facing new threats, such as international terrorism and proliferation of conventional weapons." These changes in the world have led to members of the CF "increasingly being requested to support peace-enforcement and combat operations." The government's decisions to commit members of the CF to these missions have caused "a high operational tempo that stresses their families, interferes with their training, and wears out their equipment, which gets more use than was anticipated when it was acquired."¹⁸

Even UN "peacekeeping" missions can involve combat operations, as documented in a 1999 DND report on CF members serving in the Canadian Contingent United Nations Protection Force (CC UNPROFOR) from 1993-95. This report concluded that members of the CC UNPROFOR had encountered "the most intense military activity experienced by the CF since the Korean War."¹⁹ The following excerpt from a DND document describing working conditions during a recent CF deployment to Afghanistan, sometimes referred to as "peacemaking," gives some idea of the work conditions during current operations: "Many members said they were working 12 to 18 hours and performing back-to-back shifts and patrols. Despite the heavy workload and high levels of stress related to both the work and the dangerous environment, morale was generally very high. CF members felt they were doing a worthwhile job and were justifiably proud of the results."²⁰

The aforementioned cuts in CF personnel and financial resources had a significant effect on its post-Cold War peacekeeping and peacemaking operations in the 1990s as shown by these excerpts from the Board of Inquiry Croatia (hereafter BOI Croatia):

Personnel shortages frequently occurred as a result of budgetary restrictions, both UN and domestic. Capping the number of troops in theatre at any given time was a typical solution to control finances. This often forced units to reorganise so that maximum force numbers were not exceeded. Unfortunately, these emasculated units were incapable of responding to any risk expansion or emergency situation. In some cases, they may not have had the proper specialists included in their integral support elements.

Under operational conditions the consequences of splitting and over-stretching army units are immediate and often debilitating. In the short term, tactical efficiency is degraded, which may, in turn, lead to weaknesses that a belligerent

¹⁸ "Preparing for the future," DND web site, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/about/future_e.asp, internet accessed 1 May 2005.

¹⁹ DND, *Croatia Board of Inquiry – Provisional Report*, 15 December 1999, 6. Note that the Board's Report was on the DND website for some time after its release. It has since been removed, and virtually nothing of the Board's work is now available on the DND website (http://www.forces.gc.ca/boi/engraph/home_e.asp). References here are to a copy of the Report in the author's possession.

²⁰ *Annual Report 2003-2004* [of the Ombudsman for National Defence and the Canadian Forces], http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/annual/2003-2004_e.asp#Workload, internet accessed 1 May 2005.

can exploit. More importantly, in the long term, the operational tempo must deteriorate or, conversely, if it remains the same, the unit members will have to work harder and longer. The result is debilitating stress and the eventual degradation of the unit's most valuable combat asset – its people. To deploy under strength is to expose troops to elevated combat risks, or to excessive stress, or to possible undetected environmental hazards, -- conditions which were found in Croatia.

Throughout the Balkans, and in UNPROFOR especially, the nature of peacekeeping changed. Canadian troops were exposed for extended periods to dangers not normally associated with previous peacekeeping situations. However, while the environment changed, CF organizations and doctrine did not. Suddenly, soldiers found that they were not facing organized military units ready for cease fire arrangements, but rather "...bandits, drunks, criminals and child soldiers...." to quote Major General Alain Forand.

The Croatia Board of Inquiry is concerned that the criteria may not provide an adequate short and long-term impact assessment on Department of National Defence human resources. We also received evidence that imposed personnel ceilings have placed commanders in the position of having to tailor less than optimal organizations for service in areas of risk. Numerical deficiencies were often the result of budgetary restrictions on the number of troops that the UN or Canada placed on the peace support force or the national contribution to it. The Board is concerned that force structures for peace support operations are not always a reflection of operational requirements but of imposed financial and resource limitations.

A series of reports released by the Ombudsman for National Defence and the Canadian Forces (hereafter the Ombudsman) have concluded that many of the same issues identified by the BOI Croatia, due to the increased burden that the post-Cold War high operational tempo has placed on the CF, continue to affect the CF, its members and their families, despite greater attention paid to these issues by DND and other government agencies as a result of the recommendations of the BOI Croatia.²¹ Historically, the ability to carry out missions effectively without overburdening its personnel is directly related to the resources available to an armed force to carry out its missions.

During the Second World War, 1,086, 343 men and women "performed full-time duty in the three fighting services" (the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force), and of this number 96,456 were "killed or wounded or died on service." To deal with its massive wartime force, a significant part of which conducted expeditionary operations, the Canadian military created a large, complex personnel

²¹ DND, News Release, "Ombudsman finds military decisions too often overlook soldiers' needs" (18 June 2002), http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/mediaRoom/newsReleases/2002/06-18_e.asp, internet accessed 1 May 2005.

management system.²² Critical to Canada's success in raising and sustaining its wartime forces was its large pool of personnel. This gave the armed services the necessary flexibility to cope with attrition due to casualties and other personnel losses such as injury and sickness, plus the flexibility to deal with unanticipated missions. Another factor that worked in the armed services' favour was that the vast majority of their personnel were engaged for "hostilities only" service, which meant that the military did not have to sustain this force's viability over a long period of time.

Unlike Canada's armed forces in the Second World War, the CF today has two significant challenges in carrying out its roles and missions: 1) a declining personnel and resource base with increasing commitments, and 2) a responsibility to sustain its forces over the long term, i.e., indefinitely. In order to meet these challenges the CF, like other Western armed forces, has devised personnel policies to give its members time to recover from operations, to take career and professional development courses, and to allow them to fill a training or a staff position before entering a period of training to prepare for operations again. These policies are based on a professional development model that allows time for professional courses, self-development, and experience in various jobs, like staff and training positions, as well as experience on operations. While it is tempting to some to cut back on professional development and training during periods of high operational tempo, this practice sacrifices the long term sustainability of the force for the short term achievement of operational missions.

In a crisis such as the post-9/11 "War on Terror" a focus on the short term can be justified and managed using a **crisis personnel employment cycle** with these phases: 1) operations (6 months), 2) rest (several weeks or months as required depending on the severity of operations), and 3) prepare for operations (several weeks or months depending on complexity of the mission). This cycle is based on a **2:1 ratio of personnel at home to personnel on operations** and can be maintained for a short period of time. However, the high toll that this cycle takes on personnel leads to the degradation of the force in relatively short period of time (several years) through casualties, burnout, and voluntary attrition. Furthermore, this model allows no time for the education and training of members of the force necessary to maintain the professional expertise of its members and to allow them to maintain the professional competencies required to meet the challenges of a complex and changing world. A leading authority on professional military education put it this way: "Soldiers today can no longer just practice the science of killing in order to win. They must understand and be sensitive to alien cultures. They must be skilled in the art of peacekeeping and stability operations. They must be able to operate with coalition partners and work with governmental and non governmental institutions such as the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders."²³

²² C. P. Stacey, *Arms, Men and Governments* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1970), 66, 590; and Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, 185.

²³ Robert H. Scales, "Studying the Art of War," *Washington Times* online version www.washingtontimes.com (17 February 2005) internet accessed 17 February 2005. Another leading American commentator recently noted that to cope with the complex environment in which militaries operate today their personnel need "far greater knowledge and understanding of different human behavioral patterns, cultures, regions and societies are essential. These cannot be acquired in two- or three-day familiarization courses or part-time. And, as technology, science and knowledge grow exponentially, the

To mitigate the negative effects of the crisis personnel employment cycle and to allow for some medium term force sustainability, when necessary, a **high operational tempo personnel employment cycle** can be used. It consists of these phases: 1) operations (6 months), 2) rest (several weeks or months as required depending on the severity of operations), 3) professional development and/or non-operations job (1-3 years), 4) prepare for operations (several weeks or months depending on complexity of the mission). This cycle is based on a **3:1 ratio of personnel at home to personnel on operations**. However, this cycle, if used for long periods of time (several years), can cause a great deal of stress on both the organization and on individuals, leading to attrition rates that threaten the long term sustainability of the force. This cycle has had a particularly damaging effect on the ability of for Air Force personnel to maintain their skills because expeditionary deployment cycles are very long, typically approaching 12 months when all pre-deployment preparation and post-deployment activities are factored in. Therefore, personnel are often unable to complete all the training and education required to acquire the skills necessary for career progression, nor are they able to retain all of their required skills because while on operations not all necessary skills are practiced.²⁴ For example some air transport personnel, both aircrew and groundcrew, are required to maintain skills necessary to conduct tactical air delivery (parachute) operations. However, if at the end of a six month deployment the skills associated with tactical air delivery (parachute) operations have not been used, they will have degraded to the point where the personnel can no longer conduct these operations.

An armed force that must sustain itself at a certain size and level of readiness indefinitely needs to adopt a **long term personnel sustainability employment cycle** similar to this one: 1) operations (6 months), 2) rest (several weeks or months as required depending on the severity of operations), 3) professional development and/or non-operations job (1-3 years), 4) professional development and/or non-operations job (1-3 years) 5) prepare for operations (several weeks or months depending on complexity of the mission). This cycle is based on a **4:1 ratio of personnel at home to personnel on operations**. This type of cycle is necessary for professional militaries to maintain their long term viability because of the need for extensive training and education of their personnel, the need for large staffs to procure and carry out life cycle management of high technology equipment, as well the need for large numbers of personnel to fill staff, training and other non-operations jobs.

It is important to note that for all of the cycles to work as described it is assumed that most personnel are fit and able to be employed in all parts of the cycle, i.e., the TES represents a very high percentage of the entire force. Personnel who are not fit to go on operations and who can only do non-operations jobs merely transfer the stress of serving on operations on to those who are fit to deploy with the concomitant harmful effects on

military must keep up.” Harlan Ullman, “Educate the Military,” *Washington Times* online version www.washingtontimes.com (13 April 2005), internet accessed 13 April 2005.

²⁴ Heide, “Canadian Air Operations in the New World Order,” 84.

the long term sustainability of the force.²⁵ Significant numbers of unfit personnel could turn what appears to be a long term personnel sustainability employment cycle into a high operational tempo personnel employment cycle or even a crisis personnel employment cycle. Recent studies have shown that, despite the efforts of the Air Force to use a personnel employment cycle with better prospects for the long term sustainability of the force, attrition rates for Air Force personnel are forecast to double over the next five years and not stabilize at lower levels until at least 2012. This attrition problem could have a severe impact on the Air Force's ability to carry out its roles and missions in the short term let alone sustain itself in the long term.²⁶

For much of the period since the end of the Cold War, for the reasons described above, the CF has been forced to use a **high operational tempo personnel employment cycle** with about one third of its deployable force "preparing for, engaged in or returning from an overseas mission."²⁷ As noted above in the CF economic impact assessments, this high operational tempo combined with a lack of personnel and financial resources has led to a situation where the CF is unable to sustain its ability to carry out its roles and missions in the long term.

In an attempt to address some of these personnel issues, an "operational pause" or slowdown in operational tempo was implemented by the CF leadership in 2004. According to CF policy documents, this "operational pause," which resulted in a deliberate reduction in the operational readiness of parts of the CF, was implemented to "bring the CF into compliance with the policy of the Chief of the Defence Staff that requires at least 12 months between overseas missions for all personnel."²⁸ However, as we shall see, this policy of an "operational pause" or slowdown in operational tempo was not entirely successful in addressing the personnel problems associated with a high operational tempo.

²⁵ The concepts related to the personnel sustainability employment cycle have been developed by the author as part of the curriculum of the Advanced Military Studies Course which he has taught at the Canadian Forces College as an academic over the past seven years. The principal sources for these concepts are at "AMSC Bibliography: Sustainment: a Select Bibliography" at <http://wps.cfc.forces.gc.ca/bib/bibsustain.html>. Recent examples of the problems caused by the high operational tempo personnel employment cycle on US Forces in Iraq can be found in Bradley Graham, "General Says Army Reserve Is Becoming a 'Broken' Force," *Washington Times* online version www.washingtontimes.com (6 January 2005), internet accessed 6 January 2005; and Thomas E. Ricks, "Wars Put Strain on National Guard," *Washington Times* online version www.washingtontimes.com (6 June 2004), internet accessed 6 June 2004.

²⁶ DND, *The Aerospace Capability Framework*, 47.

²⁷ "DND, Operations, Current Operations," DND web site, http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/operations/current_ops_e.asp, internet accessed 4 May 2005.

²⁸ DND, *2004-2005 Report on Plans and Priorities*, "Section 1: Planning Overview Challenges and Risks – Regeneration of CF members - The 'operational pause,'" http://www.vcds.forces.gc.ca/dgsp/pubs/rep-pub/ddm/rpp/rpp04-05/sec1d_e.asp, accessed 26 Dec 2005. The need for an operational pause to enable the CF to recover from its high operational tempo was identified by then-Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) General Ray Henault in 2004 in *Annual Report 2003-2004*, "Regeneration," http://www.cds.forces.gc.ca/pubs/anrpt2004/part3-regenerating_e.asp, accessed 26 Dec 2005.

PART 3 – THE CURRENT SITUATION

Current CF Policy and Procedures Relating to Personal Readiness

General. A number of investigations, such as the BOI Croatia and CF/DND Ombudsman's reports²⁹ into how the CF treats members diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), have helped to persuade the CF to formally recognize that the nature of post-Cold War operations requires a new approach to personnel sustainment issues. Until relatively recently the concept of individual readiness most frequently used by the CF was focussed almost exclusively on an individual's combat skills, and physical and medical fitness. Although some aspects of what could be considered psychological readiness were included in assessments of readiness, such as the member's family situation insofar as it might detract from his or her ability to carry out assigned duties, a member's psychological health was not a significant factor in the CF assessment process when considering fitness to deploy.

In the past few years policies and procedures have been put in place that were intended to address personnel readiness in a more holistic manner, including policies that were designed to ensure a high level of pre-deployment personal readiness amongst CF personnel at all times, rather than finding out just before a deployment that significant numbers of personnel are not available to deploy. Other policies have been introduced that deal with all aspects of individual health, and programmes have been designed to encourage a wide range of healthy lifestyle habits.

For the most part, CF deployment policies have been developed to deal with Regular Force members that are deploying as part of a formed unit and preparing to deploy from their garrison location. However, as a result of many factors, including the high operational tempo discussed earlier, many units require both Regular and Reserve Force augmentation to reach the unit size required for the mission. Although there are some policies intended to address the needs of these augmentation groups, these policies are not as mature as those dealing with the core formed units.

Current Policies. Current CF policy dealing with the desired health end-state of CF members reflects a holistic approach to the issue, giving relatively equal prominence to physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being. Strategic level policy, summarized in Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources Military), abbreviated as ADM HR (Mil), Instruction 04/05 issued on 29 March 2005, defines health in the CF context as, "A state of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This instruction further declares that DND "... is committed to the provision of comprehensive HP [Health Promotion] programmes to the CF. The CF is committed to HP as both an organizational and individual responsibility by providing the

²⁹ See for example, Ombudsman, "Off the Rails: Crazy Train Float Mocks Operational Stress Injury Sufferers" report dated 6 Mar 2003 http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/special/OTR-toc_e.asp; Ombudsman, "Follow-up Report: Review of DND/CF Actions on Operational Stress Injuries," report dated Dec 2002, http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/special/OSI-toc_e.asp; and Ombudsman, "Systemic treatment of CF members with PTSD Complainant: Christian McEachern," report dated Feb 2002, http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/reports/special/PTSD-toc_e.asp.

environment, tools and information to enhance health and reduce or eliminate high-risk behaviours among CF members.” Finally, this inclusive approach to health defines HP as, “The process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. To reach a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well being, an individual or a group must be able to identify and realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment.” This all encompassing approach towards health is understood by the CF to not only improve the well being of individual members of the organization, but to also be essential for the operational effectiveness of the CF.

DCDS Direction for International Operations. Deputy Chief of Defence Staff Direction for International Operations (DDIO) instructions address the deployment-related aspects of CF members’ health. The DDIO, while referencing other departmental policy documents, is the primary source of deployment-related information. Chapter 12 of the DDIO contains the personnel support direction and it is intended to provide high level direction and guidance to commanders and staffs on the selection, screening, and preparation of CF members deploying on international operations,³⁰ as well as direction on the members’ post-deployment activities.

A departure from earlier approaches that focussed exclusively on the members’ health is the current much broader policy wherein family concerns are now treated as a major category in pre-deployment assessments. The DDIO states quite clearly that family are a part of the deployment preparation phase, “CF members deal with many concerns, considerations and preparations when readying themselves and their families for deployment. Answers to frequently asked questions are consolidated at Annex M [of DDIO]. In addition, DAOD [Defence Administrative Order and Directive] 5044-1 directs all personnel to have a Family Care Plan (FCP) and to review and amend it during the deployment preparation phase.”³¹

Further policy on support provided to CF members and their families by the CF, including the role of Deployment Support Groups, is found in Director of Quality of Life (DQOL) (2002-02-08), which defines deployment as “... the temporary relocation of military forces or individual CF members on a mission to an area of operations, exclusive of normal training or exercise.” It further states that besides members of formed units who deploy: “CF members who deploy as individual augmentees and their families shall receive DSG [Deployment Support Group] service from their unit, base or wing who will request the assistance of the MFRC [Military Family Resource Centre] nearest the augmentee’s family.”

The necessity for pre-deployment screening³² is identified in DDIO chapter 12, section 5, and article 1217: “All military personnel being considered for a posting or attach posting assignment to a deployed operational area, including a Special Duty Operation (SDO)

³⁰ For the purposes of personnel support, an operation is defined as the deployment of an expeditionary formation, unit or members to an area of operations in or beyond Canada for purposes other than administration or training and subject to orders from the strategic or operational level.

³¹ DDIO, chapter 12, article 1217 – 6.

³² Pre-deployment screening is defined in DDIO, chapter 12, article 1217 – para 3. “Pre-deployment screening is the process by which the member’s readiness for deployment is confirmed in terms of qualifications, administrative requirements, health and domestic factors.”

will undergo some form of deployment preparations.” The DDIO expands on this prerequisite for pre-deployment screening in some detail, and lays out the full requirement in the form of an extensive checklist at Annex K, Appendix 1 for pre-deployment and Appendix 2 for redeployment. In general terms, the chapter details the minimum requirements that a member must meet during the screening process in order to be considered deployable. These requirements are:

- Career implications – no impediments to the member completing the full tour;
- Rank and occupation requirements are met;
- Personal problems – the member does not have any disciplinary, compassionate, medical, administrative, or personal legal problems;
- Waivers – the member must not have served an unaccompanied tour of duty outside Canada for at least one year. If this is not the case, the member’s CO must request a waiver of the one year tour interval, through the chain of command, for approval by the Chief of Staff, J1 (joint staff personnel advisor). Approval of the request is based on operational necessity;
- Host nation sensitivities – the member’s religious or ethnic background or laws and customs of the host nation must not place the member in extraordinary jeopardy;
- The member must have sufficient time remaining in their terms of engagement to complete the tour;
- The member must be 18 years old;
- The member must not have any medical limitations that preclude them from deploying;
- A medical officer must certify that there are no medical reasons precluding deployment;
- To ensure the emotional, psychological, and social fitness of a member to deploy, an appropriate health care provider must conduct screening. If a social worker is not available, a Chaplain or a Personnel Support Officer may conduct the interview;
- A member must have all required immunizations; and
- A member must also display a minimum level of dental fitness prior to deployment.

A review of two reserve Brigade Groups’ deployment handbooks indicates that a similar requirement exists for reservists for both deployment and redeployment procedures, and that the required information is probably provided in a more easily distributed form, in the handbooks, for the reserve members than it is for the Regular Force members.³³

³³ “32 Canadian Brigade Group Overseas Deployment Handbook for the Soldier, the Soldier’s Family and the Soldier’s Unit” (26 April 2005); and “36 Canadian Brigade Group Overseas and Domestic Operations Deployment Handbook for the Soldier, the Soldier’s Family and the Soldier’s Unit” (September 2005).

Phases of Post-Deployment Reintegration: The four phases of the post-deployment reintegration³⁴ process each consist of specific activities with timelines identified, and checklists have been developed that must be followed. In brief, the phases and activities identified with each are:

- **Phase One:** This phase begins before the re-deployment commences, and involves both the preparation of the members in theatre and their families at home. The process requires significant cooperation amongst a number of agencies, including the Military Family Resource Centres (MFRC). It begins well before the deployed personnel begin to leave the theatre and is compulsory for all personnel. Two to four weeks prior to redeployment, in-theatre briefings are given to all deployed personnel, to make them aware of the programs, services, and service providers that are available to both the member and their families for any post deployment related issues for which they may require assistance. This period may also include a one-on-one interview with a Chaplain, a social worker or other mental health professional. Family reintegration briefings are provided to both the members in-theatre and their families at home to prepare them for the probable stresses related to the family reintegration. Similar briefings are provided for workplace reintegration, including for reserve force members. Briefings are provided to alert the member to potential medical and mental health care issues that might arise, including environmental health concerns and operational stress injuries.
- **Phase Two:** This phase, if deemed necessary by the task force commander and approved by the DCDS, involves a decompression at a third location (i.e., neither in theatre nor at the home location), because some deployments may be so difficult as to require decompression before returning to the home location. A set of criteria are provided to assist the Task Force Commander in reaching a decision – for example, the operational tempo experienced during the deployment and the type and frequency of traumatic events.
- **Phase Three:** This phase consists of the reception, immediate post-deployment administration, partial workdays at the home unit, and leave. The importance of the reception upon arrival in Canada is included here, and the significance of reception for augmentees and reservists is stressed. At the home unit the partial workday program has been developed to allow a gradual return to normalcy in both the workplace and within the family unit. This consists of three half workdays where half days of useful employment, organized sports and other activities with the peer group, are combined with half days off. Similar provisions for half work days are made for augmentees, recognizing that they have no returning peer group, but that gradual reintegration into the workplace is still beneficial. For reserve members, it has been directed that partial workdays are to be funded in their contracts. Post-deployment leave cannot be granted until all other phase three activities are completed, including the redeployment checklist.

³⁴ Reintegration, as defined in the DDIO Chapter 12, section 1220, para 1 is “... the process by which CF members return from a deployment to everyday roles and activities at personal, domestic, and organizational levels.”

- **Phase Four:** This phase consists of post-deployment follow-up activities, and normally extends for six months from the date of return to Canada. This phase does not commence until all post-deployment leave has ended. It includes administrative, medical, and mental health follow up activities, again detailed in a check list. Key activities are the enhanced post-deployment screening interview (between 90 and 180 days after return) and the complete medical examination.³⁵

CANFORGEN 118/05 – Screening and Reintegration for the Canadian Forces. The current policy that outlines the fundamental requirements for screening and reintegration of members of the Canadian Forces, commonly referred to as the “two-tiered screening process,” is described in detail in CANFORGEN 118/05 issued by ADM HR (Mil) in July 2005.³⁶ Both successful pre-deployment screening and effective reintegration of CF members back into their garrisons and families is an important factor in reducing long term psychological damage to individuals. The BOI Croatia recommended that the CF conduct more detailed medical examinations of CF members before and after deployments,³⁷ and this recommendation was subsequently supported by the CF/DND Ombudsman report, which recommended that the CF develop a standardized (pre-deployment) screening process and that the CF set up a pilot project to determine the most effective means of allowing members to be reintegrated into family and garrison life.³⁸

The aim of this CANFORGEN, supported by the specific details laid out in DDIO chapter 12, section 5 – Personnel Support, Deployment Preparation, is to ensure the standardization of:

- The annual screening process [referred to as “Tier One”] for all members of the Regular Force and Primary Reserve;
- Pre-deployment screening [referred to as “Tier Two”] and post-deployment reintegration activities of all durations; and
- The screening and reintegration processes for members selected for high tempo units (HTU)³⁹ or designated high tempo positions (HTP).⁴⁰

The responsibility to ensure that Tier One screening is completed every year and the results recorded with the centralized Human Resources Management System (HRMS) lies with an individual’s commanding officer (CO). The CO is also responsible to ensure that Tier Two, or mission specific, screening is completed when an individual is scheduled for a DCDS-controlled deployment, and these results also recorded in the HRMS.

³⁵ CANFORGEN 118/05 ADM(HR-MIL) 052 0421Z JUL 05, paragraph 10.

³⁶ CANFORGEN 118/05 ADM(HR-MIL) 052 0421Z JUL 05.

³⁷ Croatia BOI Report, dated 19 January 2000, p. 46, Recommendation 25.

³⁸ Systemic Treatment of CF Members with PTSD, September 2001, recommendations 14 and 15, page 135

³⁹ High tempo units are defined as designated units or positions that are regularly tasked for short term deployments of 1-60 days primarily to special duty areas (SDA) or special duty operations (SDO) and therefore require enhanced screening on posting and annually to ensure that all members are fit for deployment.

⁴⁰ CANFORGEN 118/05 ADM(HR-MIL) 052 0421Z JUL 05, paragraph 2.

Post-deployment requirements are also set out in a check list, detailed in the DDIO, and all members whose deployments have exceeded 60 days must follow it. Even those members who return within the 60 day limit must report to their medical facility and fill out a form declaring whether or not they have been injured or are suffering an illness as a result of their deployment. In addition, these members are to be interviewed by their unit supervisors as soon as practicable after their return to determine if follow up is necessary. As with the pre-deployment requirements, the CO is responsible to ensure the proper reintegration steps are carried out and the completion of the process reported up the chain of command.

The pre- and post-deployment standards are the same for augmentees as they are for members of the formed unit they are assigned to. For augmentees, the responsibility for ensuring successful screening and reintegration rest with the chain of command, rather than a specific CO.

Deployment Support Groups. The role and function of Deployment Support Groups, or DSGs, are described in DAOD 5544-3. The DSG is the national terminology for a group that stays in Canada to support deployed members and their families and is referred to in by each Environment as the Naval Shore Element, the Army Rear Party and the Air Sponsor Group. Particularly within the army, the term “rear party” is still widely used.

DSGs are formed under the authority of the unit CO with members drawn from the unit to be deployed or, if necessary, supplemented from other units. With respect to augmentees, the DAOD specifies that CF members who deploy as individual augmentees and their families shall receive DSG services from their unit, base or wing who will request the assistance of the Military Family Resource Centre nearest to the augmentee’s family.

The principal role of DSGs is to contribute to the well-being of deployed CF members and their families throughout all three phases of a deployment. The DSG is tasked to provide:

- access to local military family resources, programs and services;
- information on civilian family related programs and services;
- accurate and timely mission information; and
- assistance during family-related emergencies.

Pre- and Post-Deployment Waivers. In order to mitigate the effects of multiple deployments on individuals, CF policy outlines a number of conditions that must be met before an individual can be deployed again after returning from an unaccompanied posting. These conditions are designed to allow the individual to rest and recover from the stresses of expeditionary operations, conduct professional development, and re-connect with his or her family before re-deploying, as described above in the long term personnel sustainability employment cycle. Exceptions to these policies can be granted by waivers, requested by the member or the member’s Commanding Officer.

Post-Deployment – Sixty-Day Waiver. The first policy is designed to allow members to complete phase three of their post-deployment reintegration process, which is designed to ascertain if members have any post-deployment problems, as well as allowing them some time with their families by protecting them from being sent away from their home unit for a period of 60 days after returning from an operation of six months or more. This policy is outlined in DDIO article 1223 which quotes CANFORGEN 035/01 in stating that “following all DCDS directed operations of six months or more, there is to normally be a sixty day period in which members are not subject to postings, attach postings or temporary duty due to activities such as career courses or incremental taskings.” Commanding Officers must personally approve each case where the 60-day period cannot be met, and have them entered into HRMS (Record Travel and Waiver Data, Waiver Information Frame). In addition to this policy regarding DCDS-controlled operations, other Environmental Chiefs of Staff (ECSs) and Group Principals are encouraged to respect the 60-day waiver for non-DCDS operations and may increase the waiver protection period beyond 60 days to suit their own Quality of Life (QOL) initiatives.

Pre-Deployment – the 365-day Waiver. The second policy is designed to allow members to rest and to take necessary training or education by protecting them from further deployments for a minimum of a one year period after returning from an operation of six months or more. This policy is outlined in DDIO article 1218 which tells its readers that CFAO 20-50 directs that “A member shall not normally be posted outside Canada or to an isolated post to which dependants are not authorized to proceed at public expense, within one year after returning to Canada from another such unaccompanied tour. An exception to the above may be made by NDHQ where volunteers or Service requirements exist.” Requests for such waivers are to be initiated either by the member or the CF and shall follow the chain of command to NDHQ for approval by COS J1 in the DCDS Group. Staffing of the request rests with J1 Coord in consultation with COS J3 in the DCDS Group. Approval is primarily based on the operational necessity and the possibility of finding a qualified individual from elsewhere. The home unit records waiver approvals in the Human Resources Management System (HRMS), using the Record Travel and Waiver Data, Waiver Information Frame. Those who were deployed on an attached posting (temporary) do not normally require a waiver.

Time between Unaccompanied Tours. In addition to the waivers described above, it is CF policy that its members should normally have a three year break between unaccompanied tours. This policy is described in CFAO 20-50 which states that “A member shall not normally be posted to a post outside Canada or isolated post to which dependants are not authorized to proceed at public expense, within one year after returning to Canada from another such unaccompanied tour. *Normally, a member shall serve three years in Canada between unaccompanied tours.* An exception to the above may be made by NDHQ where volunteers or Service requirements exist [emphasis added].”

All of these policies were intended to allow the CF to manage its personnel readiness issues in a more structured and comprehensive manner so that the CF could sustain itself at its required size and level of readiness indefinitely. The next section of this report summarizes how effective certain SMEs believe these policies to be.

Perceptions of Personal Readiness

The tension between the necessity for the CF to generate forces to meet its assigned tasks in a period of high operational tempo and the necessity of giving CF personnel adequate breaks between deployed and expeditionary operations has caused a number of problems. Some of these problems were alluded to in a letter from the DCDS addressed to the Level 1s⁴¹ dated 10 December 2004. In that letter the DCDS stated that: “Recent efforts by some Force Generators to reduce the number of screening deficiencies are laudable; however, significant problems remain for some operations, particularly those not centred on formed units.... The nature of deficiencies observed vary, including missing documentation, lack of a suitable Class C contract, and in some instances the necessary qualifications. Our smaller missions are particularly vulnerable to this.” The DCDS’s concerns were echoed in a January 2005 Navy document called “Pre-deployment Screening Deficiencies,” which stated that pre-deployment preparations have been “especially problematic for MARCOM [Maritime Command] in the past with respect to some of the smaller missions when small numbers of Navy personnel deploy as part of a mission from units located all over the country.”⁴²

Two examples follow that illustrate the nature of the problems described in the DCDS’s letter and the Navy document. The first example gives the insights of an SME based on an individual CF member’s experience with personal readiness; the second example is based on the views of a number of SMEs who give the Commanding Officer’s perspective on subordinates’ personal readiness.

Personal Readiness from the Perspective of an Individual CF Member. Extensive discussions with one SME, selected because the member was preparing for a deployment on a peacekeeping mission, provided significant insight into how some of the pre-deployment preparations are implemented, and to a degree, how successful they were in physically and psychologically preparing the individual for deployment. In this case, the SME was a junior non-commissioned member of the Air Force Reserve, serving in a support trade in NDHQ and being deployed on her first mission as an augmentee to an established peacekeeping force in the Middle East.

Her experience in the pre-deployment phase was generally unsatisfactory and bore little resemblance to the detailed process described in policy. Starting with the joining instructions (which contained an incorrect and out of date screening form) through to arranging a room in Trenton the night before her departure flight, her experience included occurrences that were inconsistent with policy, and more importantly, inconsistent with good, solid psychological preparation for the mission.

⁴¹ “Level 1s” refers to the senior advisors to the CDS within the NDHQ structure, including the Commanders of Maritime Command, Air Command and the Army who are also the Environmental Chiefs of Staff (ECSs).

⁴² Director General Maritime Personnel and Readiness, “Pre-deployment Screening Deficiencies,” file number 3731-3000-1 (DMPOR 2-3 - RDIMS 36222), dated 19 Jan 2005.

For example, when this individual reported to her own unit orderly room, as directed by the NDHQ tasking office, to arrange for her pre-deployment training in Kingston at the Peacekeeping Support Training Center, she was told that "... they didn't do that." She was sent back to the tasking office which then reluctantly made the required arrangements. In many cases the joining instructions and the pre-deployment instructions would refer to activities that were to be done by the "parent unit." However, when either her own unit in Ottawa or the NDHQ tasking cell was approached, she was frequently sent to the other organization for help.

The issue of kit was also problematic, and of great concern to the individual. She was especially concerned that she would arrive in theatre without an essential piece of kit, and as a result would let down the rest of the team. The NDHQ supply section was clearly not prepared to issue much of the required kit because of her reserve status, and the differing scale of issue for reserves. As an Air Force reservist she was even less likely to be entitled to receive on a routine basis some field equipment, like combat clothing, and yet she had been warned that kit issue in theatre was not available. Fortunately, having been a supply clerk earlier in her career and by coincidence having worked in the NDHQ supply facility, she was able to resolve much of this issue out on her own. Before she left, she described the attitude of those in the organizations that were supposed to support her as "... they just didn't want to have anything to do with you at all." Upon departure, she was concerned that she might still be missing some kit.

Personal Readiness of Subordinates from the Perspective of a Commanding Officer.

A senior commander of an operational formation provided some insight into his subordinates' personal readiness, and willingly identified issues that he felt were important to understanding the personal readiness issue. One area he identified as a major concern that he felt particularly strongly about was the level of access his personnel had to competent mental health services while they were in garrison. He believed that his formation had insufficient mental health professionals, i.e., social workers, psychologists, and family support personnel, to meet the needs of the people in his formation, and that local professionals were not available to fill the gap. He felt that this was a particularly serious problem because the current high operational tempo his formation was experiencing was responsible for a significant increase in the number of operational stress injuries which he feared could become more serious without readily available and easily accessible care.

As an example of the type of issues that were behind his concern, he shared statistics that indicated approximately 10 percent of the personnel in his formation were taking prescribed medication for mental health related issues. He speculated that the numbers were about the same in other similar formations. Further he indicated that about 25 percent of the releases from his formation were for medical reasons.

In subsequent discussions, a senior padre and a senior medical officer associated with the same formation indicated that their experience reinforced the commander's assessment. They believed that the deploying personnel they were associating with were seeking counselling and mental health services in increasing numbers and that the local caregivers

“were simply swamped.” The mental health team in the same location as the operational formation described very similar concerns, and expressed their frustration in being unable to handle the workload. A significant problem associated with the delivery of mental health services in this location was not associated simply with the lack of qualified personnel. In reality, funding for the personnel was available and the mental health team leader felt he could find trained caregivers, but the only facility available for the team was so small that they could not add another person. The local senior officer responsible for funding infrastructure was clearly aware of the problem and was aggressively making the case for financial support for more infrastructure to higher headquarters.

The formation commander also expressed concerns about the manner in which the 365 day waiver was being employed. He found that the need to elevate approvals to National Defence Headquarters to be inflexible and not aligned with authorities and accountabilities. For example, he suggested that the effect of a waiver of the 365 day rule varied depending on the circumstances of an individual. A single member who enjoyed his last tour and was seeking to “...do what he had been trained to do” ought to be given approval for another tour within the waiver period, while a married member who was only looking for the financial advantage ought not to be granted a waiver. He felt that the person in the best position to understand the difference between these two cases would be in the member’s immediate chain of command not staff in Ottawa.

These two examples are a preliminary indication of the types of problems being encountered by those dealing with personal readiness of members of the CF preparing for deployments or expeditionary operations. They appear to be representative of a whole range of issues that should concern those involved with individual readiness.

Discrepancies between Policy and Practice

To date, very little research has been done to see if CF policies related to individual readiness are achieving their stated aims, or if CF members perceive that the policies are achieving their aims. For example, under existing policy, commanding officers and others (e.g., doctors, social workers, and padres) have a responsibility to ensure that personnel are adequately prepared – both physically and psychologically – to deploy. However, there appears to be some confusion among those who are responsible to ensure that personnel are adequately prepared over the nature and the amount of responsibility that each bears. It is also acknowledged that following deployments individuals have their own responsibilities to ensure that they are able to continue as effective members of the CF, including being ready for future deployments. But no systematic study of the nature of these responsibilities or how they are perceived has been conducted. Furthermore, little research has been done to ascertain when CF members feel they are, or are not, ready for operations. This is an important point to consider because those who are more psychologically resilient to the stressors associated with high levels of operational tempo may have a different view of their level of personal readiness to deploy from those who are not as resilient. Thus, it becomes important to determine what personal readiness is and how to measure it, so that these types of individual differences can be quantified.

PART 4 - DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Emerging Themes

Two significant questions have emerged from this study. How well do individual members of the CF (and their COs) understand the approach to preparing individuals for deployment and do they believe it works?⁴³ How are new approaches to individual preparedness for deployments working as described in policy?⁴⁴

There is no indication that there is a systemic method to collect statistics to assess how well the various policies are meeting their intent, or indeed, if the policies are being applied consistently across the CF.

Unintended consequences of policy decisions in other areas are continuing to cause serious problems for health delivery. Furthermore, the financial demands on the force generators associated with transformation are reducing the funds available at local levels for infrastructure maintenance and development. And the lack of funds for infrastructure development is causing many of the short term problems in providing a sufficient level of garrison mental health care.

Initial investigation has shown that CF members who deploy, depending on their circumstances, are treated quite differently – in fact, policy direction reinforces, to a degree, this different treatment. For example, according to one senior commander with extensive experience in organizing deployments, there are a considerable number of senior personnel who, due to family or personal reasons, are not able to deploy. To a certain extent, the system works around these personal restrictions, at least for a period of time, although they may impact career progression. For more junior personnel, the two-tiered screening policy, described above, was first introduced in 2004 to give commanding officers a better understanding of the true state of readiness of their units, and to facilitate the DCDS tasking process.⁴⁵

The different treatment accorded to deploying CF members is based on factors like employment status (e.g., Regular vs. Reserve), deployment job (part of a formed unit vs augmentee), and so on. The factors allow us, for purposes of preliminary analysis, to place deploying members in a number of identifiable sub-categories, each with a potentially different level of personal readiness. The sub-categories can be described as follows:

- Deploying members belong either to an operational military occupation (usually referred to by the abbreviation “MOC” [Military Occupation Code] that refers to the code assigned to all military occupations) or to a support MOC;

⁴³ As described in CANFORGEN 118/05.

⁴⁴ CANFORGEN 112/04, replaced by CANFORGEN 118/05 in July 2005.

⁴⁵ CANFORGEN 112/04 ADM HR (Mil) 061/04 101505Z AUG 04.

- Members of operational or support MOCs can deploy as 1) part of a formed unit, 2) as individual augmentees to a unit, or 3) as part of an attachment to a formed unit;
- Deploying members, either operational or support, may be Regular Force or Reserve Force members; and
- Deploying members may originate from a main mounting base or they may come from a location not directly involved in the operation, or indeed, from a location, such as NDHQ, that is not normally involved in force generation activities.

Table 1 summarizes these sub-categories.

<u>OPERATIONS</u>		<u>SUPPORT</u>	
Regular	Reserve	Regular	Reserve
Formed unit	*	Formed unit	*
Augmentee	Augmentee	Augmentee	Augmentee
Base/Wing	Base/Wing	Base/Wing	Base/Wing
NDHQ	NDHQ	NDHQ	NDHQ
* Situation not probable, i.e., reserves are not likely to deploy as a formed unit.			

Table 1 - Sub-categories of deploying CF members

Based on these sub-categories, there is the potential for up to nine different sets of circumstances that deploying members may encounter in the pre-deployment phase. Each circumstance may have a different impact on the level of personal readiness, and can result in significantly different experiences for individuals. These situations are described in more detail below.

1. **Operational MOC – Regular Force – Formed Unit – deploying from a mounting base.** This is the circumstance that the majority of CF members who are going to deploy find themselves in. They are part of an operational MOC, members of the Regular Force and are part of a formed unit that is deploying from the mounting base. This is also the situation that most of the personal readiness policy has been developed to deal with. Preliminary observations based on discussions with SMEs among operational personnel from one of the Canadian Mechanized Brigade Groups (CMBG) and one Air Force Wing preparing a team for deployment, assigned medical and pastoral support staff, and senior members of the operational chain of command, indicate that:

- a. The policy described in CANFORGEN 118/05 has significantly improved the chain of command's knowledge of the overall personnel readiness to deploy and enhanced confidence in their ability to meet force levels assigned.
- b. According to SMEs in the chain of command, the level of personal readiness is still being negatively impacted by the current high pace of operations, even during the CDS-mandated "operational pause" or slowdown in operational tempo that is now in effect (described previously). This state of affairs is driving up substantially the number of waivers required, particularly in support MOCs, to meet the manning requirements.
- c. At least in some locations, according to both the chain of command and care givers that are intimately involved with these issues, the operational pause did not reduce the operational tempo – in fact, according to one senior officer, the operational pause was achieved on the backs of his personnel.
- d. The number of mental health caregivers available in a location can dramatically impact the quality of garrison mental health care, and that in turn impacts on the level of personal readiness. One padre described the situation as, "... 5 o'clock the base shuts down, and the padre is the only one there. You can't find a social worker, you can't find a doctor, and you can't find anyone. They all go and hide."
- e. Individuals are expressing strong reservations to the medical and pastoral support staff about their personal readiness, having had insufficient time to recover from previous deployments and the necessity to engage in a highly demanding pre-deployment training cycle.
- f. Medical and pastoral support staffs are expressing their concerns about the psychological fitness of CF members under their care in open forums.
- g. Individual cases of operational stress injuries are on the rise from at least one CMBG location, and the level of specialized medical care is well below minimums required to deal with the increase in Operational Stress Injury (OSI).⁴⁶
- h. The mutual support provided within formed units appears to be beneficial to the members and especially to the families associated with the deployment.
- i. When support for the family is not available (for example, due to cultural isolation of the type experienced by a Francophone family in a small-town Anglophone environment), the operational readiness level of the serving member suffers.

2. **Operational MOC – Regular Force – Augmentee – deploying from a mounting base.** This is the circumstance that a number of CF members who are going to deploy find themselves in. They are part of an operational MOC, members of the Regular Force, but are assigned as individual augmentees to a

⁴⁶ The responsibilities of CF leaders in dealing with OSI issues are discussed in Allan English, "Leadership and Operational Stress in the Canadian Forces," *Canadian Military Journal* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 2000), 33-8.

formed unit that is deploying from the mounting base for an operation. They are required to augment operational units that are under strength, and this situation is addressed in some of the personal readiness policy. There are no specific preliminary observations for this group at this stage, although a review of related work, such as CF/DND Ombudsman Office reports allows some preliminary conclusions to be drawn. Based on a review of existing work it has been noted that:

- a. Augmentees and their families normally have inadequate personal support from their own units.
- b. Augmentees normally join the deploying unit in time to undergo the full pre-deployment training with the unit; however, if they are not from the same base as the unit deploying, the length of time away from home and family is greater than those from the formed unit.
- c. Augmentees are not normally afforded the same degree of post-deployment care and consideration as those from the deploying unit, including the applicable work and leave entitlements.

3. **Operational MOC – Reserve Force – Augmentee – deploying from a mounting base.** This is a situation where the person deploying is from an operational MOC assigned as an individual augmentee to a formed Regular Force unit for an operation, but the person is a member of the Reserve Force and a member of a reserve unit co-located with or near the mounting base. This is a circumstance that is occurring with increasing frequency as members of the Reserve Force are being asked to deploy due to the shortages of trained Regular Force individuals within many Regular Force units. The vast majority of personal readiness policies are designed to deal with Regular Force situations where the force generation is being done by a base familiar with the deployment requirements, although reference is occasionally made to Reserve Force members and their requirements. The preliminary observations for this group are based on discussions and input from a limited number of Reserve Force SMEs, mostly at lower rank levels. Based on limited research, the preliminary observations are that:

- a. Reserve members frequently feel that their rank and qualifications are not recognized as equivalent to those of the Regular Force, thus increasing their sense of isolation from the rest of the unit and negatively influencing their personal readiness.
- b. The families of Reserve Force members' families are less likely to access the services of the Military Family Resource Centre than are Regular Force members' dependants – and MFRC regulations discourage early access. This has the effect of increasing the level of stress for deploying Reserve Force members

4. **Operational MOC – Reserve Force – Augmentee – deploying from an NDHQ-like environment.** The situation, where the deploying member is part of an operational MOC, but a member of the Reserve Force deploying as an augmentee from a location that does not, on a routine basis, carry out the

preparation for deployment function, is different yet again. A non-force generation location, like NDHQ, is particularly problematic. Based on limited investigation, the preliminary observations are that:

- a. Neither the member's own unit nor the local Regular Force offices are well prepared to support the pre-deployment requirements of the deploying member.
 - b. Supply issues can become problematic for a reserve member when the Regular Force supply organization does not recognize that the deploying Reserve members has the same entitlements as the Regular Force members – this in turn increases the level of anxiety the member faces in the preparatory phase, and reduces the level of personal readiness.
 - c. The deploying member can develop a strong sense of isolation from both his or her own unit and from the organization they are deploying to augment.
 - d. The deploying member may be left with a sense of not being well-prepared for the mission, particularly if they have not deployed before
5. **Support MOC – Regular Force – Formed unit – deploying from a base.** The circumstance that sees a support organization deploying as a formed unit has not occurred with great frequency in the past, although the Air Force is currently establishing this capability under the Mission Support Squadron (MSS) initiative. The initial cadre formation of the MSS was created in Winnipeg at 17 Wing on 1 March 2006. The proof of concept of the MSS will be at the upcoming Maple Flag exercise this year at Cold Lake. One of the reasons for developing this approach to mission support is to avoid the problems discussed below, when individual support members were sent off one at a time, often without fanfare and often without members of the home unit being aware of their deployment. Families were not well supported in these cases, and members often returned with no recognition for their service. The MSS initiative certainly holds the potential to improve the situation for Air Force support members.
6. **Support MOC – Regular Force – Augmentee – deploying from a base.** This scenario, which sees CF Regular Force members from a support classification deploying from a base as augmentees to a formed unit, occurs frequently, and in the case of a number of MOCs, has severely strained their ability to continue to generate forces. These individuals generally fall either into the category of caregivers, such as padres or medical personnel, or personnel more directly related to combat support, such as engineers and signallers. Based on limited research, the preliminary observations are that:
- a. The effectiveness of screening program for some of these personnel is questionable. One member who has deployed a number of times said, "I'm just getting ready to head off to Kandahar in August, and I just wonder how much of this stuff are we carrying off with us without realizing that we are carrying stuff? ... We go through the screening questions and say we are OK. But years later our marriages are breaking

up and we don't understand. Our kids won't talk to us and we don't understand."

- b. These MOCs appear to have a higher operational tempo than that being experienced by personnel in other MOCs. One senior officer indicated that he would be hard pressed to find a single engineer or signaller on his base that had not been deployed within the last year.

7. **Support MOC – Regular Force – Augmentee – deploying from NDHQ-like environment.** There was not sufficient data collected during this research to draw conclusions about this category; however, in 2004 an individual senior officer fitting this description provided a graphic description of his experience to an NDHQ committee tasked with overseeing the DND/CF response to Operational Stress Injuries. His observations were:

- a. There was no "ownership" of the member once he was designated to deploy – in other words, his NDHQ organization was far too busy to worry about assisting him in the pre-deployment process. There was little or no contact with his family from his unit, although the MFRC was supportive.
- b. The Peacekeeping Support Training Centre in Kingston did a good job of preparing him for the tour – especially in helping him understand the situation he would encounter in the theatre of operations.
- c. There was no one at the airport to meet him or other members of the group that returned with him, except his wife. Other members that returned with him were travelling to other locations – in one case to Newfoundland where the member (a reservist) was scheduled to go back the work almost immediately. The senior officer had a well developed sense of responsibility to try and help these individuals, and the lack of support on return was clearly a source of continuing stress to him.
- d. On return, members of his home unit were dismissive of his experiences, and suggested he had been "... on a jolly while they had been carrying the load for him."⁴⁷

8. **Support MOC – Reserve Force – Augmentee – deploying from a base.**

Insufficient data collected during this research to draw conclusions.

9. **Support MOC – Reserve Force – Augmentee – deploying from NDHQ-like environment.** This is the situation described above in the section on personal perceptions of individual readiness. It may perhaps describe the worse-case scenario for personal readiness in the sense that all four variables being scrutinized are challenging. The data collected for this report suggests that support MOCs are generally less well prepared from a personal preparedness perspective than operational ones. Similarly, the policies designed to improve the situation for Regular Force members, while normally having a reserve

⁴⁷ Briefing provided to the ADM HR (Mil)-chaired Operational Stress Injury Steering Committee in NDHQ in the fall of 1994 attended by Joe Sharpe.

component, are not as well developed nor as well resourced as the ones for Regular Force members. An augmentee has a much higher potential to be isolated than a member of a formed unit, and the CF organizations that are not used to dealing with mounting a deployment frequently do not deal with the challenges of this situation very well. In summary, the problems encountered by the SME who fit this description were:

- a. The unit orderly room was not aware of its responsibilities to support the deploying member and appeared to treat the member's needs as a low priority item.
- b. The deploying member felt that she was on her own to coordinate and arrange such essential things as the issue of needed kit, travel and accommodation requirements, pre-deployment training, and to ensure that her screening form was correct and up to date.
- c. The deploying member ended up being rushed for time prior to deployment as she was sent from one location to another and back again, due to confusion in administrative responsibilities for preparing her for deployment.
- d. In the end, the member was left with a level of uncertainty that detracted from her level of personal readiness.

10. General Observations that apply to more than one category. Although the above categorization is useful for understanding the particular circumstances associated with specific cases, a number of observations were found to be applicable to more than one category:

- a. The current pre-deployment screening techniques do not always uncover the underlying issues that impact on psychological readiness. One SME with considerable experience in deployed operations revealed that many members he knows would discuss the type of issues that should come out during pre-deployment screening only with peers they felt comfortable with, and would not discuss issues dealing with family relationships and so on with personnel from the Deployment Assistance Group.
- b. There is a significant impact on the psychological health of members of the caregiver community as well as the peer group when sufficient local resources are not available to deal with mental health issues. One SME, assigned to support deployed members, described his personal reaction to being unable to find support locally for many of the soldiers that come to him for reassurance, and expressed his own approach to self care, "But what am I going to do now? I do feel like I am carrying a heavy load, and my response to this has been to arrange for my retirement next year ... It's bigger than I can handle."
- c. Although the waiver policy is well known and understood in the field, observations from a number of SMEs indicate that it is not having the desired effect. For example, a caregiver, reflecting on the four marital separations that he had dealt with in one week, mused about the actual

effectiveness of the waiver policy, “One spouse had all the evidence there – in three years she had seen her husband for six months.” He went on to explain that while the waiver focussed on actual deployment time, in reality the demands that caused family separation were far more frequent. Career courses, frequent exercises, and increasingly longer preparation times required for deployment were all cited as demands that take time away from personal recuperation and the re-establishment of family stability.

- d. There is not a good understanding of the underlying principle of waivers in the field. An aspect of pre-deployment waivers that was mentioned by a number of serving members was that “... there is a lot of pressure direct or indirect for waivers to be signed.” The pressures may be financial as well as operational – for example, one account suggested that as a result of soldiers joining the CF at a later age than previously, and frequently with families, the need to earn more money earlier in their careers made volunteering for another tour within the waiver period attractive.
- e. In another description based on personal experience, one senior officer noted that many times younger members, particularly those without family dependents in the area, were looking for the adventure associated with deployments, and considered the need to wait out the period of time directed by policy between deployments as an unnecessary penalty. In fact, they considered it unfair if they were not allowed to go on deployment within the waiver period. This same senior officer suggested that there was insufficient flexibility in the policy for commanders to exercise their authority to cater to the individual needs of soldiers. He noted that commanders had both the responsibility for the welfare and morale of the troops, and were willing to be held accountable for the outcomes of their decisions in this area; however, the bureaucracy required the permission for waivers to be granted from staff in higher headquarters.
- f. One commander observed while discussing the issue of waivers that the pressure to deploy during the waiver period may be largely self-generated, but that it is very real nonetheless. He felt this to be especially true for the combat service support MOCs, such as engineers and signallers.
- g. SMEs from the chain of command, the caregiver community and the individuals deploying seemed to agree that there is a disconnect between policy and reality in the area of waivers – according to one experienced leader, “Policy alone doesn’t solve problems in the field.”

Observations Concerning Personal Readiness in the CF

The following observations concerning personal readiness in the CF have been identified as a result of this study.

Existing Policy

- DND has developed and promulgated policies dealing with individual readiness, at least partially in response to a number of internal and external investigations that have shown that the manner in which the CF approached preparing CF members for deployments was causing physiological and physical harm to individual members and to their families.
- The resulting policies tend to be reactive to specific recommendations dealing with unique situations rather than dealing proactively and collectively with the range of pre-deployment issues and the different categories of CF members who deploy.
- The policy direction emanates largely from ADM HR (Mil) with the DCDS direction referring to HR (Mil) policy.
- The organizations that are responsible for implementing the various policies are not normally in the chain of command of the organization issuing the policy, i.e., the force generators (ECSs and to a lesser extent the DCDS Group) are largely responsible for the actions that are required, while the personnel organization (ADM HR (Mil)) develops the policies.
- The policies lack any type of performance measure or monitoring mechanism, making it largely impossible to assess how well they are being implemented and how effective they are from the individual's perspective.
- CF policy precludes a member from being re-deployed for a period of 365 days after returning to Canada from an unaccompanied tour of six months or more; however, an exception to this policy may be made by NDHQ where the member volunteers or Service requirements exist.
- CF policy states that following all DCDS-directed operations of six months or more, there is normally to be a sixty day period in which members are not subject to postings, attached postings or temporary duty due to activities such as career courses or incremental taskings.

Individual Members' and Commanding Officers' Understanding of Personal Readiness

- The general awareness of the need for personal readiness associated with pre-deployment preparation has been raised considerably by the ADM HR (Mil) policy directions in this area.
- The most common interpretation of the term "readiness," whether from the individual member or from the command chain, is the preparedness of the individual to perform his or her military function. The interpretation does not

seem to vary whether the term “operational,” “personal” or “individual” is used as a modifier of “readiness.” There is an awareness of the importance of psychological preparedness, but it has not reached any sort of parity with the awareness accorded operational or physical readiness.

- According to one senior member of the chain of command, who discussed the psychological readiness of members to deploy, there is some natural apprehension and fear among personnel before a deployment – but the majority of members have a fairly positive experience, and look forward to going on deployment again.
- With respect to psychological readiness, caregivers and members of the chain of command felt that for the majority of soldiers the question of psychological readiness to deploy is not as big an issue as it is for the families. One caregiver with extensive experience working with families and members summarized the significance of family stability to the question of a soldier’s psychological preparedness, “What is the most significant thing to do to prepare a soldier for a tour overseas? For married soldiers the most important thing to be psychologically ready is that they have had a chance to re-integrate with their family to stabilize. If he or she feels that their family is looked after, to the degree that they want, if there is medical care, if their family is stable, the soldier will be able to suck up a lot...The resilience will increase a lot.”
- Personal readiness was often described as varying significantly from person to person – acknowledging that individual circumstances are quite different, and, even for an individual, can change dramatically in a short period of time. For example, many younger soldiers, especially those without families, are anxious to do what they have trained for. However, there was strong agreement that for members deploying that had families, the level of stability within the family was a critical issue. In the words of an experienced caregiver, “A happy family means a happy soldier.”
- A number of caregivers, with extensive experience in dealing with deployed members’ families and the members themselves both in garrison and on deployment, concluded that psychological readiness of members was tied directly to the welfare of the family.
- The military culture discourages the individual coming forward with concerns about personal readiness to deploy.
- The military culture also requires commanding officers to go to extreme lengths to meet operational tasking targets that are passed down the chain of command.
- Even at very senior rank levels, there is a sense that the chain of command can do very little to reduce the operational tempo which many feel is significantly threatening the psychological health of their subordinates.
- Some very senior members of the operational chain of command believe that the mental health support available to their subordinates is drastically under resourced to support their requirements.

- There is significant mutual support available to deploying members and their families within the formed units when they deploy.
- Augmentees and their families normally have less personal support from their own units for the pre-deployment phase and the post-deployment phase.
- Families of augmentees, particularly reservists, do not seek the support of Military Family Resource Centres, often because they are geographically distant from the Centres.

Individual CF Members' Insights into Personal Readiness

- Individual CF members are experiencing significantly different approaches to pre-deployment and post-deployment preparation, which results in different levels of individual readiness.
- There are at least nine distinct situations that apply to CF members, depending on the component to which they belong, whether or not they are support or hard operational MOCs, whether they deploy as part of a formed unit or as an augmentee, and finally, whether or not they are doing their pre-deployment preparation from a force generation mounting base or from a location such as NDHQ.
- The worst case scenario for individual readiness appears to be a reserve member from a support trade deploying as an augmentee from an NDHQ-type location. The physical aspects of pre-deployment preparation, when not properly done, negatively affect individual psychological readiness.
- Members of formed units from operational MOCs deploying from a force generation mounting base are suffering reduced levels of personal readiness as a result of the high operational tempo that is creating situations where individuals are not able to have the appropriate time between deployments for psychological recovery.
- From the individual member's perspective, a policy such as the 365-day waiver policy designed to protect a member from being over committed, which has a built-in feature that allows for it to be set aside for service requirements, sends a contradictory message. In effect, it says that while a member's health and stability is important, it can be disregarded if there are not enough personnel available to meet the demands of a high operational tempo. While most serving members acknowledge that some exceptions to policy are logical, they believe that one that can be invoked so easily does not encourage the CF to ensure personnel levels are sufficient to meet tasking levels.
- Many deploying CF members do not have access to sufficient mental health resources to permit them to understand adequately their level of psychological preparedness, and their families frequently lack access as well, particularly in the more remote locations.
- Reservists have very limited access to mental health services both pre- and post-deployment, and their families have even less access to these resources.

- Non-force generation locations that are responsible to prepare members to deploy are not well organized to support pre- and post- deployment activities. Normal routine administrative processes at these locations serve the deploying member very poorly.
- Many home units for augmentees are not aware of their responsibilities for the pre-deployment preparation of their members.
- Reserve Force members frequently feel that their rank and qualifications are not recognized as equivalent to those of Regular Force members, thus increasing their sense of isolation from the rest of the unit.

Commanding Officers' Perspectives on the Personal Readiness of Subordinates

- Early indications are that there are a significant number of senior personnel who, due to family or personal reasons, are not able to deploy. Further research will be required to gauge the extent of this issue and how procedures vary across ranks and MOCs in dealing with this issue.
- Commanders, at very senior levels, are expressing serious concerns about the risks that are being taken by the CF with the psychological health of some of its members in order to provide sufficient manpower to meet force generation requirements.
- Personal readiness concerns are not being fed back to the senior levels within ADM HR (Mil) on a routine basis.
- Operational chains of command, up to the most senior levels, are routinely more aware of the problem areas surrounding personal readiness than the strategic personnel organization - ADM HR (Mil).

Discrepancies between Policy and Practice

- Policy establishes an expectation that CF members will not be deployed again within one year of having been deployed for six months or more unaccompanied, and then only with the member's voluntary agreement. Policy also directs that a member will not be subject to postings, attached postings or temporary duty due to activities such as career courses or incremental taskings for a sixty day period after returning from a deployment. Practice, as a result of the high operational tempo being experienced particularly by members of some support classifications, is that the majority of personnel on some deployments have agreed to waive the mandatory time between deployments. The sixty day post-deployment rule is waived as a routine matter, particularly in the Army where incremental instructional support at the battle schools from those who have just returned from deployments is the normal operating procedure.
- Despite policy that directs a two-tier readiness system in the CF, a number of senior members are not able to deploy due to personal restrictions, and their chain

of command is not aware of the situation. For more junior personnel the two-tiered readiness system may provide more reliable information on deployability.

- The senior CF officer responsible for operations, the DCDS, has recently acknowledged serious deficiencies in pre-deployment preparation for some operations, particularly those not centred on formed units and involving smaller missions. He has recognized that these deficiencies have an impact on individuals.
- A commander of a CF joint operations organization has noted very serious deficiencies in the pre-deployment preparations for significant percentages of personnel showing up for operations, and has communicated these deficiencies to higher headquarters.
- The Navy has recently noted serious problems with pre-deployment screening deficiencies particularly with respect to some of its smaller missions, which pull small numbers of Navy personnel from units located all over the country.
- One commander of a unit that was assigned responsibility as the agency that would coordinate the training, mounting, and deployment of a number of individual augmentees for a mission noted serious deficiencies in the pre-deployment preparation of those members sent to his unit. The deficiencies included lack of warning time, no embarkation leave, no knowledge of mission duration or location, and missing kit.
- A telling comment was made by one SME who was preparing for another deployment, "One legitimate way to take a rest is to get sick. At least you don't need to make an excuse if you are sick."

Potential Future Research Areas

- To create a type of Performance Measure that would allow the CF to understand the effectiveness and efficiency of the procedures resulting from CF policy designed to improve the personal readiness of CF members in the pre- and post-deployment phases.
- To devise a methodology to randomly assess the level of personal readiness of individuals being prepared to deploy. The methodology would have to be suitable for individuals from each of the major categories or situations described above.
- To prepare a responsibility-accountability map that would assess the degree of interrelationship between the bureaucracy responsible for making the CF individual preparedness policies for members of the CF preparing to deploy and the chain of command actually accountable for implementing the policies for preparing CF members to deploy.
- To design a research project to study second and third order consequences of high deployment rates on families and specific family members. For example, the performance of school age children can be significantly affected by the degree of stability in the home. When a family member deploys, the resulting disruption can impair performance. When a member returns from deployment another disruption occurs, with resulting changes in routine, and in some instances the

difficulty the member may have in re-integrating may also be reflected in school performance.

- To design a project to assess the impact of the level of medical and other support services available to the family in the local community on family stability during a deployment, and to determine the impact this may have on the psychological readiness of the deployed member.
- To develop a methodology to assess the impact on the family and on individuals when married service couples are both subject to deployments.
- To conduct a study to assess the overall effectiveness of the Air Force's Mission Support Squadron concept. Since this initiative is in the very early stages of being implemented at one Air Force wing, it should be possible to monitor the impact it has on the members and their families from that location.

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(U) This report was written to assist the Stress and Coping Group within Defence Research and Development (DRDC) Toronto develop, as part of its long-term project to explore the notion of psychological resiliency, a methodology to examine operational readiness at the individual level (personal readiness) in the Canadian Forces (CF), especially in the areas of: 1) existing policies governing individual readiness for deployed operations, and 2) actual and perceived individual psychological readiness for deployed operations. While the CF has had considerable success in devising and maintaining systems to assure unit readiness, the CF has invested very little in examining the question of individual or personal readiness. For the purpose of this study, personal operational readiness (individual readiness) is defined as "the physical, operational and psychological preparedness of an individual to deploy."

Individual readiness has become an even more pressing issue for the CF in the past decade with the higher operational tempo that the CF is experiencing. This high operational tempo combined with a lack of personnel and financial resources has led to a situation where the CF is unable to sustain its ability to carry out its roles and missions in the long term.

The report observed that there are a number of systemic problems that appear to have negative impacts on the ability of the CF to ensure high levels of individual readiness. The report recommended that research be considered to further investigate the observations made in this report.

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(U) personal readiness; Canadian Forces

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